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Paris: Possible Violence Marking Arson Attack Anniversary

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According to several press reports, the French police intelligence agency has warned that tensions in the Parisian suburbs could lead to violent infractions on or around October 27, marking the one-year anniversary of the accidental death of two youths that

sparked three weeks of nationwide uprisings. Since mid-September, four incidents involving attacks against French police officers have taken place. They have all occurred in the Parisian suburbs and follow a similar pattern: as soon as the police presence is detected, they are ambushed by crowds of varying sizes.

September 17: Two members of an anti-riot unit were hurt in an ambush by youths in the southern Paris suburb of Corbeil-Essonnes. The men were patrolling the area when their vehicle was pelted by stones; when one of the officers left the vehicle, a group of 20 youths attacked him. One officer was hospitalized and eleven people were arrested.

October 2: Six police officers on vehicle patrol were injured when over 250 people from the suburb of Les Mureaux used stones and pickaxes, threatening the officers that they would not get out of the police car alive. The officers had been trying to stop a driver for not wearing a seat belt. The police pushed through the crowd, taking refuge in a nearby school while waiting for reinforcements. Only one arrest was made.

October 15: A gang of youths ambushed and stoned a police car in Epinay-sur-Seine, a northern Paris suburb. The patrol car was trapped when a driverless vehicle was rolled behind it by a group of up to 50 youths. One policeman suffered serious facial injuries; eight youths were arrested.

October 22: A band of up to 30 youths forced passengers out of a bus, set it on fire, and stoned the firefighters who came to the rescue. The attack took place in Grigny, a neighborhood in the southern Paris suburb Essonne. No one was injured; at least two people were arrested, one a 13 year-old.

The American private sector was not targeted during the violence throughout France last year. It is not anticipated that American businesses and personnel will be targeted if incidents reoccur this year. Should violence erupt again in the coming weeks, OSAC reminds constituents to pay close attention to local news reports and police instructions, and to remain clear of demonstrations or large gatherings of people. Most of the unrest last year transpired during the evening hours; therefore, OSAC suggests that

constituents remain vigilant during these times and avoid affected areas.

OSAC will be monitoring the situation closely.

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